

Docket # FAA-2002-13378

To: Docket Management System
U.S. Department of Transportation
Room Plaza 401
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the proposed regulations as published in the Federal Register of September 27, 2002, Docket number FAA-2002-13378, and urge you to adopt the regulations without further delay.

The proposed regulations would implement the law that requires air carriers to establish reporting and record keeping for animals that are lost, injured, or killed during air transport separate from the current lost baggage claim system. It also requires that the airlines determine the cause of an incident resulting in the loss, injury or death of an animal, and take corrective action to prevent or minimize its occurrence in the future.

It is my understanding that the proposed regulation limits the animals covered to only those that are kept as a pet, or being sold as a pet, and that the original intent of the legislation was to include all animals transported. I would respectfully urge that the definition be expanded to reflect this. I also understand that the law requires airlines to train their personnel regarding safe and humane handling and care of the animal from the time of check-in to return to the owner or guardian. This is crucial if we are to prevent mishaps from occurring and, thereby, prevent animals from escaping, sustaining injuries, or perishing during transport.

As someone who cares about animals and their humane treatment, I was deeply disturbed to learn about the numerous incidents of animals escaping from their carriers, running down airport runways not to be found again, sustaining injuries from rough handling by baggage personnel, and perishing in cargo holds that are not equipped with temperature control devices to counteract the extreme temperatures of the summer and winter months. More people today consider their pets a part of the family and would prefer to travel with them. Existing provisions prevent them from doing so. Finally, all animals, regardless of being someone's companion, should be afforded the necessary provisions to ensure their health and safety during air transport. Adoption of the proposed regulations will go far in assisting in this effort and provide the public with vital information concerning an airlines' track record transporting animals in order to make informed decisions.

Thank you again for issuing the proposed regulations. I urge you to adopt them immediately so that the law can take effect today.

Sincerely,

L. Vanessa Gruden
Executive Director
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